

MINUTES
BALTIMORE COUNTY *Linking Communities to the Montreal Process*
***Criteria and Indicators* PROJECT**

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, October 7, 2003
Sherwood House, Cromwell Valley Park

Attending:

Charlie Conklin (Gunpowder Valley Conservancy); Jo Owen and Michael DeFilippi (Watershed Protection Coalition); Mel Noland and Lucy Wright (County Forestry Board); Pat Bradley (EPA/MAIA); Jeff Horan and Rob Prenger (DNR); Christine Duce (Baltimore City DPW); Pat Cornman, Rob Hirsch, Bret Sage and Don Outen (Baltimore County DEPRM).

Welcome and Agenda Review:

Don Outen welcomed those in attendance and opened the meeting at 10:10, and attendees introduced themselves.

Review of Minutes from Last Steering Committee Meeting:

The draft minutes from the September 2 meeting were accepted without changes.

Announcements:

Mel Noland and Lucy Wright updated the group about the planned tour October 14 of the municipal drinking water reservoir lands that Glatfelter Pulp Wood Co. manages for the City of Hanover PA. At this point, about 25 people have expressed interest in attending. It was noted that we should still attempt to get some other agencies to attend, and Don offered to contact Recreation and Parks. A good discussion ensued about using the bus ride to PA to have a group discussion about what we expect to see as "sustainable" forest management. The group was encouraged to send candidate questions to Pat Cornman, who will compile them and forward them to Lucy and Mel.

Don commented that he had a recent but brief conversation with Gerry Gray of American Forests, our sponsor for the June 10 Sustainability Forum. Gerry has been talking with Ruth McWilliams of the US Forest Service about the future work for the overall Montreal Process project and some discussion about adding national pilots. In response to Jeff Horan's question about whether our project has a budget, Don said that we are moving forward only through the efforts of the volunteers here and with some staff time from cooperating agencies, but that we need to get to the point where we have defined our needs and can communicate them to those with funding.

In response to the funding comments, Jeff described the Forestry Innovation Grants program, which has about \$1.8 million for the 20-state Northeast Area (which includes Maryland). The grants are broad-based with respect to what they can support, and they are evaluated under three general themes (urban and cities; general stewardship, and water quality). The grant proposals must be approved and prioritized by the State Foresters. Unfortunately, the current grant deadline is October 27. Perhaps we will have an opportunity to apply next year.

Discussion:

The bulk of the meeting centered on a thorough and engaging presentation by DNR's Jeff Horan about the recently-completed *Strategic Forest Lands Assessment*. DNR received a grant from the USFS to explore the use of the Montreal Process C&I for forest management in Maryland. The assessment is summarized in a forth-coming document (may be on DNR's web site soon, but pre-publication information about the SFLA is available now at <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/forests/conferences/sfla/index.htm>) produced by DNR's Watershed Services (project manager was John Wolf). The DNR effort parallels a recent USFS effort (June 2003 *Sustainability Assessment Highlights for the Northern United States*). This assessment was produced by the Northeastern Area office under the direction of Connie Carpenter, who attended our June 10 Forum. The assessment includes Maryland and is available on-line at <http://www.na.fs.fed.us/sustainability>. Jeff also showed copies of two brochures (citizen and agency versions) that the USFS Northeastern Area program has produced for Forest Sustainability.

Jeff acknowledged that the State assessment will be somewhat limited for use at the local level due to its more "regional" scale, as it is based on 30-meter resolution satellite photography. The Strategic Assessment not only takes a first-cut approach to capturing the seven MC C&I criteria with an indicator for each criterion, but it also integrates ecological, economic, vulnerability, and restoration assessments through models to identify "strategic" forest lands. The Assessment includes state-wide choropleth maps of conditions and vulnerabilities using 8-digit watersheds and other state-wide maps of actual data distributions.

The end-point of the Assessment is to help with State and local decision-making. The strategic assessments have to be incorporated into the State's resource management priorities (which have recently been re-defined), and local governments will have to become aware of these assessments and will have to determine their applicability at the local scale and for local programs. The DNR work provides a good example of bringing the Montreal Process framework closer to home. It can be helpful as we prepare the issues report to help characterize some of the basic forest resource conditions and vulnerabilities. [Note: Don subsequently placed a request to John Wolf for the "operational" GIS mapping methodology so that DEPRM can attempt to replicate some of the maps using Baltimore County's local scale data.]

Following Jeff's presentation and discussion, the group's attention turned to preparation of the issues paper. Don briefly reviewed the list of vision statements that have been proposed to date (attached). The group was asked to continue to review these, with the goal of selecting one that can be incorporated into the proposed issues paper.

Pat Bradley also briefly discussed how the forest sustainability project could fit with EPA's Regional Vulnerability Assessment (ReVA) program, which uses environmental indicators and models to evaluate relationships among resource conditions, stressors, and impacts and to help answer specific management questions. MD DNR and Baltimore County are currently working to scope out projects to demonstrate the utility of ReVA tools at the State and local scales.

Charlie Conklin offered that we need to better educate folks about these issues and utilize some type of strategic planning or "marketing" tools that can broaden the interest in our Montreal Process project. Don responded that this is essentially what the group had envisioned as the purpose for the issues paper. A range of such techniques can be considered once the project is moving into implementation for whatever specific issues are being addressed. The challenge of the issues paper was re-stated: to develop a relatively-concise and comprehensive argument for

a deliberative and proactive approach to managing forest resources, sustainably, for multiple benefits. Jo Owen commented that a larger “master plan” is actually needed for all of our natural resources for this to be a livable area. Mel added that some data/fact sheets should be prepared for local decision-makers prior to the issues paper. Don mentioned that we had pulled some information together for the Forum in June, and with a few basic maps could have some useful data. He recommended again, however, that the group focus the initial effort as decided previously on getting a broad statement together for what the project needs to accomplish. Don offered that DEPRM staff will draft an outline of the issues paper for the next meeting.

Action Items:

1. The committee will send candidate questions for the bus ride next Tuesday to Pat Cornman, and efforts will continue to get interested folks to join us.
2. Committee members will review the proposed vision statements and provide additional input.
3. The committee will provide input on the outline for the Issues Paper for the next meeting, and DEPRM will prepare a draft outline.

Next Meeting:]

The next Steering Committee meeting was announced for Tuesday, November 4, from 10:00 to 12:00, at the Sherwood House at the County’s Cromwell Valley Park.

Directions: Exit Baltimore Beltway (Exit 29) at Cromwell Bridge Road. Proceed east on Cromwell Bridge Road and turn left about 1 mile into the Park entrance. Proceed down the drive, cross the stream and take the right fork of the road after the bridge. Continue on the loop road in front of the Sherwood House and park in the gravel lot on the east side of the house.

Adjournment:

The attendees were thanked for participating, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 PM.